

We claim:

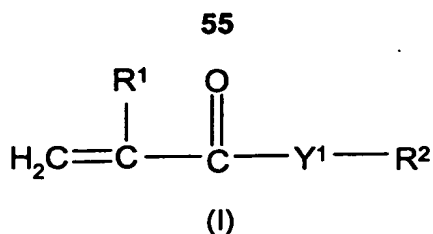
1. A cosmetic or pharmaceutical composition comprising
 - 5 A) at least one water-soluble or water-dispersible polyelectrolyte complex comprising
 - 10 A1) at least one water-soluble or water-dispersible copolymer with cationogenic groups which comprises, in copolymerized form, vinylimidazole and/or a derivative thereof and at least one further monomer copolymerizable therewith, and
 - A2) at least one acid-group-containing polymer,
 - 15 and
 - B) at least one cosmetically acceptable carrier.
2. A composition as claimed in claim 1, where the copolymer A1) comprises
 - 20 a) vinylimidazole and/or a derivative thereof, and
 - b) at least one N-vinyl lactam.
- 25 3. A composition as claimed in claim 2, where the copolymer A1) additionally comprises, in copolymerized form, at least one nonionic water-soluble monomer c) which is different from, and copolymerizable with, components a) and b).
- 30 4. A composition as claimed in claim 3, where monomer c) is chosen from N-vinylamides of saturated C₁-C₈-monocarboxylic acids, primary amides of α,β -ethylenically unsaturated monocarboxylic acids and the N-alkyl and N,N-dialkyl derivatives thereof which, in addition to the carbonyl carbon atom of the amide group, have at most 8 further carbon atoms, esters of α,β -ethylenically unsaturated mono- and dicarboxylic acids with diols, amides of α,β -ethylenically unsaturated mono- and dicarboxylic acids with amino alcohols which have a
35 primary or secondary amino group, polyether acrylates and mixtures thereof.
5. A composition as claimed in any of the preceding claims, where the copolymer A1) comprises, in copolymerized form,
40
 - a) vinylimidazole,
 - b) N-vinylpyrrolidone,
 - c) at least one nonionic water-soluble monomer which is chosen from N-vinylamides of saturated C₁-C₈-monocarboxylic acids and primary

amides of α,β -ethylenically unsaturated monocarboxylic acids and N-alkyl and N,N-dialkyl derivatives thereof which, in addition to the carbonyl carbon atom of the amide group, have at most 8 further carbon atoms,

- 5 d) at least one monomer which is chosen from acid salts and quaternization products of vinylimidazole, dimethylaminopropylmethacrylamide and the acid salt and quaternization products of dimethylaminopropylmethacrylamide.
- 10 6. A composition as claimed in any of the preceding claims, where the copolymer A1) comprises, in copolymerized form,
- 15 a) 0.5 to 40% by weight of vinylimidazole and/or a derivative thereof,
b) 20 to 99% by weight of at least one N-vinylactam,
c) 0 to 50% by weight of at least one nonionic water-soluble monomer which is different from, and copolymerizable with, components a) and b), and
d) 0 to 30% by weight of at least one monomer which is chosen from α,β -ethylenically unsaturated water-soluble compounds with cationogenic and/or cationic hydrophilic groups.
- 20 7. A composition as claimed in any of the preceding claims, where the copolymer A1) comprises, in copolymerized form,
- 25 a) 1 to 20% by weight of vinylimidazole and/or a derivative thereof,
b) 20 to 80% by weight of at least one N-vinylactam,
c) 5 to 50% by weight of at least one nonionic water-soluble monomer which is different from, and copolymerizable with, components a) and b), and
d) 0 to 30% by weight of at least one monomer which is chosen from α,β -ethylenically unsaturated water-soluble compounds with cationogenic and/or cationic hydrophilic groups.
- 30 8. A composition as claimed in any of the preceding claims, where the copolymer A1) comprises, in copolymerized form,
- 35 a) 1 to 10% by weight of vinylimidazole and/or a derivative thereof,
b) 30 to 70% by weight of at least one N-vinylactam,
c) 10 to 40% by weight of at least one nonionic water-soluble monomer which is different from, and copolymerizable with, components a) and b), and
d) 1 to 20% by weight of at least one monomer which is chosen from α,β -ethylenically unsaturated water-soluble compounds with cationogenic and/or cationic hydrophilic groups.
- 40 9. A composition as claimed in any of the preceding claims, where component A2) comprises at least one acid-group-containing polymer which comprises, in copolymerized form, at least one monomer which contains a free-radically

polymerizable, α,β -ethylenically unsaturated double bond and at least one anionogenic and/or anionic group per molecule.

- 5 10. A composition as claimed in any of the preceding claims, where component A2) comprises at least one carboxylic-acid-group-containing polyurethane.
11. A composition as claimed in any of the preceding claims, where component B) is chosen from
- 10 i) water,
ii) water-miscible organic solvents, preferably C₂-C₄-alkanols, in particular ethanol
iii) oils, fats, waxes,
15 iv) esters of C₆-C₃₀-monocarboxylic acids with mono-, di or trihydric alcohols which are different from iii),
v) saturated acyclic and cyclic hydrocarbons,
vi) fatty acids
vii) fatty alcohols
20 viii) propellant gases
- and mixtures thereof.
12. A composition as claimed in any of the preceding claims comprising at least one additive different from components A) and B) which is chosen from cosmetically
25 active ingredients, emulsifiers, surfactants, preservatives, perfume oils, thickeners, hair polymers, hair and skin conditioners, graft polymers, water-soluble or dispersible silicone-containing polymers, photoprotective agents, bleaches, gel formers, care agents, colorants, tinting agents, tanning agents, dyes, pigments, consistency-imparting agents, humectants, refatting agents,
30 collagen, protein hydrolyzates, lipids, antioxidants, antifoams, antistats, emollients and softeners.
13. A composition as claimed in any of the preceding claims in the form of a gel, foam, spray, mousse, ointment, cream, emulsion, suspension, lotion, milk or
35 paste.
14. A composition as claimed in any of claims 1 to 13 in the form of a spray, where the carboxylic-acid-group-containing polymer A2) comprises, in copolymerized form,
40 i) 60 to 90% by weight of at least one compound of the formula I



in which

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R^1 is hydrogen or $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_8\text{-alkyl}$,

Y^1 is O, NH or NR^3 , and

10

R^2 and R^3 , independently of one another, are $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_{30}\text{-alkyl}$ or $\text{C}_5\text{-C}_8\text{-cycloalkyl}$, where the alkyl groups may be interrupted by up to four nonadjacent heteroatoms or heteroatom-containing groups which are chosen from O, S and NH,

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ii) 10 to 25% by weight of acrylic acid and/or methacrylic acid,

iii) 0 to 30% by weight of at least one monomer which is different from, and copolymerizable with, components i) and ii),

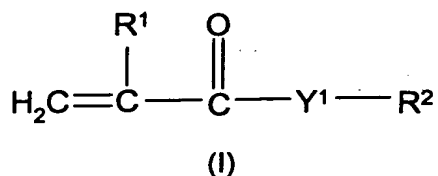
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or where the carboxylic-acid-group-containing polymer A2) is a polyurethane.

15. A composition as claimed in any of claims 1 to 13 in the form of a mousse, where the carboxylic-acid-group-containing polymer A2) comprises, in copolymerized form,

25

i) 45 to 85% by weight of at least one compound of the formula I



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in which

R^1 is hydrogen or $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_8\text{-alkyl}$,

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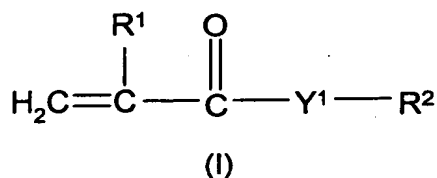
Y^1 is O, NH or NR^3 , and

R^2 and R^3 , independently of one another, are C_1 - C_{30} -alkyl or C_5 - C_8 -cycloalkyl, where the alkyl groups may be interrupted by up to four nonadjacent heteroatoms or heteroatom-containing groups which are chosen from O, S and NH,

- ii) 20 to 55% by weight of acrylic acid and/or methacrylic acid,
- iii) 0 to 30% by weight of at least one monomer which is different from, and copolymerizable with, components i) and ii).

16. A composition as claimed in any of claims 1 to 13 in the form of a gel, where the carboxylic-acid-group-containing polymer A2) comprises, in copolymerized form,

- i) 45 to 85% by weight of at least one compound of the formula I



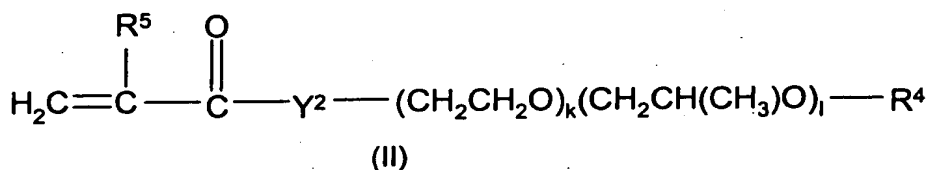
in which

R^1 is hydrogen or C_1 - C_8 -alkyl,

Y^1 is O, NH or NR^3 , and

R^2 and R^3 , independently of one another, are C_1 - C_{30} -alkyl or C_5 - C_8 -cycloalkyl, where the alkyl groups may be interrupted by up to four nonadjacent heteroatoms or heteroatom-containing groups which are chosen from O, S and NH,

- ii) 20 to 60% by weight of acrylic acid and/or methacrylic acid,
- iii) 5 to 50% by weight of at least one compound of the formula II



in which

the order of the alkylene oxide units is arbitrary,

k and l, independently of one another, are an integer from 0 to 1000, where the sum of k and l is at least 5,

5 R⁴ is hydrogen or C₁-C₃₀-alkyl,

 R⁵ is hydrogen or C₁-C₈-alkyl,

10 Y² is O or NR⁶, where R⁶ is hydrogen, C₁-C₃₀-alkyl or C₅-C₈-cycloalkyl,

 iv) 0 to 20% by weight of at least one monomer which is different from, and copolymerizable with, components i) to iii), and

15 v) 0.1 to 3% by weight of at least one crosslinking monomer with at least two ethylenically unsaturated, nonconjugated double bonds.

17. A composition as claimed in any of claims 1 to 13 in the form of a gel, where the carboxylic-acid-group-containing polymer A2) comprises, in copolymerized form,

20 i) 90 to 99.9% by weight of acrylic acid and/or methacrylic acid,

 ii) 0 to 9.9% by weight of at least one monomer which is different from, and copolymerizable with, component i),

25 iii) 0.1 to 3% by weight of at least one crosslinking monomer with at least two ethylenically unsaturated, nonconjugated double bonds.

18. A composition as claimed in any of the preceding claims, which additionally comprises at least one nonionic thickener.

30 19. The use of a polyelectrolyte complex as defined in any of claims 1 to 10 in skin-cleansing compositions, compositions for the care and protection of the skin, nailcare compositions, preparations for decorative cosmetics and hair-treatment compositions.

35 20. The use as claimed in claim 19 in hair-treatment compositions as setting agents and/or as conditioners.

40 21. The use as claimed in claim 20, where the composition is in the form of a hair gel, shampoo, setting foam, hair tonic, hairspray or hair mousse.

22. The use of a polyelectrolyte complex as defined in any of claims 1 to 10 as auxiliary in pharmacy, preferably as or in (a) coating(s) for solid drug forms, for modifying rheological properties, as surface-active compound, as or in (an)

adhesive(s), and as or in (a) coating(s) for the textile, paper, printing and leather industry.